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CONTACT: Julie Limpach
216-707-2261
jlimpach@clevelandart.org

**International Star from Mali to Perform at
The Cleveland Museum of Art**

“Habib’s reputation as guitarist is almost mythical.” — *The New York Times*

CLEVELAND (Feb. 3, 2003) — Vocalist and guitar virtuoso **Habib Koite** and **Ensemble Bamada** will make their Cleveland debut at the Cleveland Museum of Art, on **Friday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m.** in Gartner Auditorium. They will appear as part of the Museum’s VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts.

Tickets are available for \$27 and \$23, CMA members \$23 and \$20 by calling (216) 421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or buying online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

This concert is part of a 60-city sold-out North American tour. The French *Le Monde* hails **Ensemble Bamada** as “One of the most delightful bands we have seen in a long time.” Habib’s music, subtle, lyrical, and joyous, has earned him the adoration of fans such as Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt, both of whom ended up visiting Habib in Mali and even sharing the stage with him.

Habib Koité comes from a noble line of Khassonké *griots* (traditional storytellers/oral historians). He developed his unique guitar style accompanying his griot mother. He inherited his passion for music from his paternal grandfather who played the *djelly n’goni*, a traditional instrument associated with hunters from the Wassolou region of Mali. “Nobody really taught me to sing or to play the guitar,” explains Habib, “I watched my parents, and it washed off on me.” Habib’s first foreign release *Ma Ya* spent an unprecedented three months at the top spot on the World Music Charts Europe. Since then he has become an international star and played at most of Europe’s major venues and festivals, including the Montreaux Jazz Festival, WOMAD, and the World Roots Festival. In the spring 2000, he toured Europe and Turkey as an invited guest with the legendary avant-garde jazz group, the *Art Ensemble of Chicago*.

The Museum receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council. Promotional support for VIVA! is provided by WNWV The Wave 107.3.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America’s leading comprehensive museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

Editors Please Note: Digital images available upon request.